

Investigating Students' Favourite Themes of History Fieldwork In the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT: *The study is essentially an exploratory survey, which sets out to obtain some concrete information on the students' knowledge and understanding of, and attitudes towards, the favourite themes of fieldwork approaches to history in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS), Malaysia. The researcher employed the 'stratified-random sampling' method and selected two states in Malaysia, namely Perak and Terengganu, involving 400 students from each state. As an addition, the researcher conducted interviews with forty conveniently selected respondents. The responses were presented in the form of frequency and percentage. The results of the study show that the top three favourite themes selected by students in history fieldwork were 'building' with the score of 242 (30.3%), followed by 'family' 121 (15.1%) and 'public figures' with 101 (12.6%) responses. On the other hand, the least popular theme among the students was 'occupation' with 22 (2.8%) responses. The perceptions of students on these three themes were presented in the interview section. It is hoped that the study would raise concern, awareness and benefit to all involved in the teaching and learning of fieldwork approaches to history, especially the Standard School Curriculum of Malaysia beginning from year 2011 towards the realisation of Vision 2020, 1-Malaysia, and, Malaysia Education Blue-Print 2013-2025.*

Keywords: *favourite themes – history fieldwork*

I. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of history fieldwork in the ICSS aims to provide students more opportunity exploring, investigating, analysing, and, examining historical evidences in their surroundings. Beside the acquisition of learning and research skills, students are expected to gain more knowledge and understanding about fact and figure around them. Hopefully they would respect the changes and differences, improve where necessary, appreciate the achievements and be motivated to learn more, practice the nation-wide acceptable culture to create a harmonious environment and cultivate a sense of belonging. This would be a great advantage to the development of students because they would know and understand what they are supposed to do while they are at school and to be successful in the future. Students should be aware that school is not a place to wander around, wasting time, bullying, vandalising or being involved in gangsterism. School is an institution that must be appreciated by everyone and is a valuable part of the long term investment of the nation to achieve the challenges of Vision 2020. As a developing country, Malaysia has ample valuable historical heritage to investigate and study towards achieving the aim of the newly launched Standard School Curriculum of Malaysia beginning year 2011 where history has been included as a compulsory subject at the primary school level. In fact, this is an excellent and effective decision of the Ministry of Education Malaysia to promulgate active students who would have high loyalty to the nation in realising the 1-Malaysia aspiration.

II. LITERATURE RIVIEW

Themes and Sources of history fieldwork in the ICSS Malaysia

Fieldwork is an introductory approaches to history of the lower secondary level which is not too much is expected from the work of students. The important thing is that the student enable to achieve the purposes and objectives promulgated in the ICSS Malaysia. The Curriculum of Development Centre, Ministry of Education Malaysia proposed the main themes or areas of study for the lower secondary levels as the history of myself and my family, school, demography of local people, historical building, historical sites, place of residence, public figures and administration, and, occupation of the surroundings people (CDC 1988, 1989, 1990). These were published in the Teachers Handbook of Local History ICSS, issued by the History Unit, CDC, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, but, there was no detailed explanation of the themes, implementation and educational significant of the subject. The themes and sources are discussed in the following section which based on various references and authors.

I. Myself and my family

The main contents of this theme are the family tree, development, achievements and exclusive or memorial events (CDC 1988).

First of all, the pupils are requested to draw their own family tree, this also may be used to develop the idea of chronology. It involves tracing their ancestors, ethnic origins and relatives (CDC 1988). This can

lead to surprising discoveries for pupils when they observe that many of the people in their localities are inter-related and some are related to them.

The discussion on the development of family may include the number of brothers and sisters, their names, date of birth, date of domicile if any, date of marriage, favourite hobbies, academic performances, occupation of parents and overall family management. By this way pupil could know exactly how to relate to family members, and hopefully, develop closer links and more harmonious relationships with them.

Information about families can be acquired from various sources, official documents like the records of birth, death and marriage relating to a particular family, documents such as photographs, diaries, bills, newspapers, magazines and letters. Family and close relatives including grandparents, uncles and aunts and neighbours, friends and other community members are some of the reliable sources.

Pluckrose (1993) provides many positive suggestions regarding family studies: for the accomplished teacher this topic provides all manner of cross-curricular links: family portraits painted and drawn; a collage of episodes in family life; mathematics based upon personal height and weight, span and foot measures; the surface area of feet and hands followed by group and class graphs and mappings of the statistics obtained; geographical studies exploring family roots, favourite foods and where they are harvested; multicultural issues addressed through a study of celebrations, festivals, dietary rules, mother tongue, beliefs and customs. There is also very close tie between the surge of interest in the history of the family and the parallel growth in historical demography. In fact, Wrigley (1970) claims that the practice of sociologist and social anthropologist in their studies of contemporary communities underline the strength of the family's strategic position in studies of social change, class, the socialisation process, and political economic behaviour.

ii. A history of the students' school

For this theme, students can use their own school, the nearest example, or the school that they have previously attended. The study of this theme can be divided into various sections including the name of school, crests, symbols, buildings, infrastructure, principals, teachers, the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), figures produced, historical events, achievement in curriculum and co-curriculum (Edgington 1974, CDC 1987, Montford 1993).

Student might want to find out the old names of the school, the meaning of the school crest or symbol, the architectural structure of the school buildings, the scenario of the school compound, the development of the school infrastructure, a list of principals, the number of teachers, as well as pupils, from the early years with the names of the most notable, the role and contribution of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), established ex-students of the school, historical events, academic achievements particularly in the LSA/SRP/LCE and SPM/MCE national examinations and extra-curricular activities (Edgington 1974, CDC 1987, Montford 1993).

As an addition, the study of local schooling can illustrate the history of national education policy and the effects of national legislation on schooling (Edgington 1974, CDC 1987, Montford 1993). This is certainly true with regard to the development of main education policy particularly the Razak Reports 1956, the Rahman Talib Report 1961 and the Cabinet Committee Report 1979 which formed the basis of the present national ICSS education policy (CDC 1989, 1990) and is so significant for the pupils. In this way, pupils can trace, identify and even hypothesise the historical development of particular education practices.

The Ministry of Education's circulars and publications are the authentic sources to be used in studying a history of school. Other sources can be found from the records of individual schools; particularly interesting are school log books, school registers, teachers record books, pupils attendance books, timetables and punishment books (Hoskins 1959, Douch 1972, CDC 1988). In fact, these certainly will be more interesting for pupils.

School log books can give some information including details of attendance figures, the curriculum, attainment of pupils, inspectors' reports, buildings, outbreaks of infectious diseases, ages of students, occupation of parents and school overall performances. School registers may provide some idea of the topographical area from which the student were drawn, their ages at entry and leaving, reasons for leaving school and so forth (Hoskins 1959, Douch 1972, Stephens 1977, CDC 1987). It is interesting to discover that some of pupils aged thirteen years old were still in standard one primary school, while some could not finish their primary schooling because of getting married. These are phenomena which happened before Independence.

School magazines, often published annually, contain a lot of photographed school events such as the annual sports, teachers' days, Parents and Teachers' Association Committee members, teachers and their qualifications and Prize Giving Days. Pupils' exercise books can provide much interesting material, as shown by the essay of a thirteen-year-old girl, about 'Boys', quoted in Stephens (1977:103):

I do not like boys. They are so rough, noisy, playful and spend a lot of money. They think themselves cleverer than girls but they are mistaken. Girls are much more useful to their mothers than boys.

The above tells us something about schools in the past. There will be more to discover by studying further such kind of books.

Student can also obtain information about school from source persons such as the principal, teachers, clerks, gardeners, parents and other individuals. The senior staffs normally have more information about the school. The student would be surprised, by those examples where schools were used as war prisons during the Japanese Occupation and the principal's room was used to hang suspects or by many other historical events especially if the schools were built before the Second World War.

iii. A history of population/demography

The study of population and social structure of a locality is a common theme in the study of local history. It is interesting to study the old community of earlier generations. Hoskins (1959:25) fascinatingly emphasised that:

Up to the nineteenth century, people had depended on their own exertions to win a living from the earth, a world dependent upon human muscular power. All the primary needs of humanity, material and spiritual, were met adequately. It was a hand-made world in which all things were made one by one.

The above statement can be used to aid a comparison of living features of old times with those of the present. The present development is much influenced by various modern technologies. However, there are many old historical remains that can be said to be high in value and aesthetics.

In the study of population, Gwynne (1984:23) has suggested that the most common areas to be analysed are 'size of population, distribution of population, occupational status, wealth, and householdership'. The study of population can help students to acquire some understanding of the language of history and of the concepts of causation, change over time and mathematical skills. Thus, the theme of population can help pupils to learn some words that are often used in the learning of history such as 'migration', 'emigration', 'immigration'; 'famine' and 'labourer'. In studying the immediate neighbourhood, one comes to realise the nature of a community, that is, how it has evolved and how it can be changed.

The history of a community will include the study of ethnic groups mainly the Malays, Indians and Chinese. Each ethnic group is composed of many clans. Some questions to be investigated are why most of the Malays live in villages, the Chinese in towns and the Indians in commercial plantations.

Those studying the population that engaged in farming activities can survey the types of tools used, landscape, animals and social strata. They can also study the size of family, men, women and children. The social aspects that can be studied include the homes, types of occupations, public health, public facilities and ritual activities. The movements of local people have been caused by developments outside the locality such as urban growth, industries, education and the Felda scheme developed by the government; all these can be studied. These aspects can be used to make comparisons with the population and social structure of the past. For examples, rural agricultural activities change through time and are often influenced by government policy. This development can be used, as suggested by Griffin and Eddershaw (1994:59) 'to carry out a comparison with present day land use in the district, and to find out what contemporary farmers are growing'.

This is true of recent development in Malaysia. Some areas in Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Johor have started to grow oil palm to replace coconut and cocoa. In fact the changes of crops in local areas can illustrate the national agricultural development policy. The national agricultural development areas involved in the padi cultivation are MADA (Muda Agriculture Development Authority) of Kedah and Kerian-Sungai Manik of Perak.

Stephens (1977) suggested that the study of population is concerned with changes in the locality, the structure of the whole community not merely the ruling class, occupational structure, demographic structure, economic basis such as local industry, trade and farming.

Information about the population which is suitable and accessible to the lower secondary pupils is found in the records of the District Offices and the Municipal Boards. The District Offices which incorporates the Election Commission, is also responsible for the issue of the Census Reports. General elections are held once in four years, when the Census Record is also updated. The original census schedules are the most comprehensive records as they cover every household. Griffin and Eddershaw (1994:38) have emphasised the value of:

the list of every household, the head of the household and the names of all the others, their relationship to him [sic], their ages, birthplace and their occupations.

The Census Reports provide population figures and population trends, showing what has happened to bring about the rise and fall of population in various places. However, teachers need to gain full cooperation to obtain the relevant documents by photocopying from the District Offices.

iv. A history of buildings

This theme may cover the study of history of houses. A big house has extensive grounds, which provide the possibility of integrated fieldwork embracing geography, botany and biology. However the historical topics to be studied include furnishing, interior decoration, lighting, paintings and sculpture, the family and other occupants, life in the house in its heyday, servants, architectural features and architects and buildings materials. Stephens (1977:150) has recommended that:

comparison can be made with other great homes, outbuildings and stables, landscape gardening, agriculture, the effects of the establishment on the village in the neighbourhood, and perhaps its present significance as a tourist attraction.

This is true with regard to many architectural features of houses such as 'Minangkabau' of Negeri Sembilan, 'Patani' of Kelantan, 'bricks stairs' of Melaka, 'long house' of Sarawak and 'high pillars' of Perak. In fact, every state has its own identical architectural features.

The study of building or house history is of considerable relevance to pupils understanding and learning of history as stressed by Griffin and Eddershaw (1994:27):

There is obvious scope for linking historical with present-day social studies by comparing the children's own houses with those of the past, and by contrasting the original and present use of older properties.

The study of a castle, or in Malaysia, a fort, as mentioned by Stephens (1977:150), helps a proper understanding of:

siting, the functions of the different parts of the building, the relationship of architectural design and style to defensive considerations, and the military practices and resources of the war period.

The student can deduce and identify the main purpose of a castle such as to protect a harbour or dominate a plain. For example, the fort of 'A Famosa' built by the Portuguese on top of high ground at the river mouth has protection as its main purpose, while the 'Dutch Fort' built at Pangkor Island at the entrance of a strait opposite Lumut has had different purposes. At present, Lumut is the largest naval base of the country.

v. Historical Sites

Local museums can display evidence of trades such as tools and other relevant physical remains. Even an 'industrial archaeology' field study can be arranged. Thus, aspects of the industrial locality can be used for comparison with the present. For example, the construction of road highways has caused a decline in trade in Tanjung Malim, Kuala Kubu Town and Tapah Road. However, the construction of local roads has created suburbs and attracted certain types of industrial developments for example Shah Alam, Puchong, Serdang, Bangi, Kerteh and Senawang.

The seaside resort is another topic of history fieldwork with considerable possibilities. The main aspects to be studied are the original settlements, the occupation of the local people, the geographical features, the nature of the beach, communications and transport. Stephens (1977:98) has suggested that:

the pupils living near coastal areas can study the growth of seaside ports. This would include the history of harbours, shipping movements, the nature of the trade, the trade of the port, the routes used, the goods, the life of sailors and their families.

These aspects can be used to make comparisons with the present development and with other neighbourhood ports, for example, why Penang Port is declining while Port Klang is developing, and why foreign traders, particularly from Japan, Korea and Australia, are keen to invest in Klang Port and Pasir Gudang industrial port. Probably, the pupil also can find reasons for the decline of Kuantan Port. These ports can be compared with the rapid development of Singapore as one of the busiest ports in the world, even though Singapore has no agricultural, natural resources and mining products at all.

There are many local seaside resorts in the country. The most well-known seaside resorts are Tanjung Bidara of Melaka and Teluk Kemang of Negeri Sembilan. The coast of Kelantan, Pahang and especially Terengganu have very beautiful, long and fascinating sand beaches. However, these coasts receive fewer visitors compared with other west coast resorts. These factors can be used by students to understand more about the concept of cause and consequence. Another aspect to be studied is to what extent the existence and development of seaside resorts influenced the occupation of the local people.

vi. A history of the students' place of residence: Towns and Villages

The history of a 'place of residence' of towns or villages can be studied through the medium of place names, fieldwork and geographical structure (CDC 1989). The best way to start the work is by referring to a relevant source concerning the history of settlement which provides the names of villages, towns, farms, streets, roads, buildings, schools, natural features and districts which may give clues to early settlement and indeed to later history (Ekwall's 1960, Griffin and Eddershaw 1994).

Names deriving from geographical features are perhaps the easiest to distinguish and will usually be well known locally. Some of the common names derived from the geographical features begin with 'Kampung' (village), 'Teluk' (bay), 'Tanjung' (cape), 'Sungai' (river), 'Parit' (canal), 'Pantai' (beach), 'Gua' (cave),

'Gunung' (hill) and 'Kuala' (river mouth). Places that may illustrate the early settlers of each locality are such as 'Bukit China' (Highland of China - Chinese), 'Tanjung Keling' (Cape of Kalinga - Indians), Kampung Jawa, Kampung Acheh, Kampung Kerinchi, Kampung Banjar and Kampung Bugis (these clans are from Indonesia); and Kampung Siam which is mainly occupied by people from Thailand.

There are places named after certain historical events, legends and also animals. Examples include Elephant Village, Tiger Village, Snake River, Crocodile River and Deer River. There are also places named after fruit such as 'Durian Sebatang Village', 'Manggis Village', 'Rambutan Village' and 'Chempedak Bay'. Stephens (1977) states that the different types of place names are a useful introduction to investigating the significance of a local settlement and can form the basis of imaginative work and wider studies.

Local directories can give a first picture of some chosen place. Most local libraries will contain a set of these directories. Griffin and Eddershaw (1994:46) state:

These directories generally give a useful introductory note about the size and site of the place, principal inhabitants and tradesman and craftsmen.

Thus, history fieldwork can provide a picture of the social structure and the occupational structure of a particular area, for example, a static picture of a place in certain years, for example 1940 and 1990, revealing the way the place has changed, the rise and decline of population and whether certain old trades and crafts are still alive.

There are also records from private sources, showing the involvement of some prominent families at local and district level, and changing social conditions caused by the break-up of many very large areas. Humphreys (1953) states that even from family gossip may come elucidation on affairs of state; private letters may throw new light on historic events. These are often the most interesting sources for pupils.

Maps showing the topographical growth of a town are issued by the Town Planning section of the District Office or the Municipal Board. These maps show considerable detail of streets, shops, post offices, police stations, offices and recreation gardens. Sometimes they provide even detail of pillar boxes, lavatories, traffic lights and lamp posts.

Newspapers are another important source of history fieldwork. Normally, a big town would have its own local newspaper. Some of the prominent newspapers published in the nineteenth century were '*Majlis*', '*Bintang Timur*' and '*Merdeka*'. During the Japanese Occupation 1941-1945, newspapers were controlled by the Japanese administration and were used to propagate the Japanese military regime in the country. This is in line with the statement of Humphreys (1953:46) that;

The newspapers illustrate the local impact of national events; they reflect the manners, customs and interests of other times; they help one to get a picture of the growth and developments of the town and are an essential source of information for all events of local importance.

The District Land Office has records of maps in every locality and village. Accurate and detailed maps are very important as they can be used as a reference for types of land status and provide some idea of the number of families in the village, their income, ethnicity and standard of living.

The catalogues of sales of land which have been issued by auctioneers form a useful source for the study of history fieldwork. The records are valuable for information on land price, names of owners, types of crops and locations. These records may also give information about the impact of 'chettier' (money lender) activities upon the 'debted farmers', especially before the approval of the Malay Land Reserved Act in the early twentieth century. It was often the case in a locality that the Malays were the minority especially in urban areas. However, these records might be difficult for students and need careful guidance from the teacher.

vii. A history of public figures and local administration

There are places that were named after a prominent figure who might be the earliest settler such as Dahalan Village, Abdullah Village, San Peng and Seenivasagam. Place names referring to national figures are common such as Tun Razak Town, Hussein Onn Town and Tun Dr. Ismail Garden. They were former Prime Ministers and a Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. There are places named after prominent visitors from other countries such as Felda Suharto in Selangor and Felda New Zealand in Pahang. Suharto was the President of Indonesia. Before Independence, there were many places named after the British such as Port of Swettenham, Jesselton, Georgetown, Hugh Low, Brewster, and, Templer.

There were local and public figures who founded private Islamic schools known as '*pondok*' which can be studied by students at the lower secondary level. These '*pondoks*' emphasise the more traditional religious education system especially in Perak, Kedah and Kelantan (Sufean 1993, Rosnani 1996). Some examples are *Al-Yasiniah* and *Ehya El-Syariff* in Perak, *Pondok Pak Ya* in Kedah, and *Tok Kenali* in Kelantan. The establishment of each *pondok* school relies on the credibility, reliability and competency of the leader known as Tok Kiyai', 'Tok Guru', or 'Tok Imam' (religious figures). For examples, Kiyai Haji Yassin founded Pondok Al-Yassiniah, Kiyai Haji Salleh founded Pondok Salihiah, and, Tok Guru Kenali founded Pondok Tok Kenali. These '*pondoks*' have contributed much to the development of Islam in the country including the

formation of the Pan Islamic Party of Malaysia. However, many have not survived after the demise of the 'Tok Guru' (Mohamad Johdi 1986). The popularity of those schools has diminished since the introduction of modern secular education introduced by the British. There are many studies that could be based on this topic such as the development, reasons for decline, curriculum, timetables and the biography of Tok Kiyai or Tok Guru.

The history of local administration might include the study of the officers, law and order, administrative functions, public health, education and personalities (Riden 1983, CDC 1989). The selection of theme that is from the smallest unit to the biggest and more complicated has to take into account the likely abilities of students.

Before the British Administration, each state was ruled by a Malay sultan. Each state was divided into districts lead by a Malay Chief. However, this traditional administration was changed during the British Administration. The states were sub-divided into smaller regions. The Sultan remains the chief of state but has no ruling power. The state is led by Menteri Besar (Chief Minister). The District Officer is in charge of a district. The 'Penghulu' is in charge of a 'mukim' and 'Ketua Kampung' is in charge of a village.

At present, the administration in Malaysia is classified into federal, states, district, 'mukim' and 'kampung' (village). Administration of local affairs is further specified in terms of a particular city or town. Humphreys (1953:13) suggests that the main sources of history fieldwork are the State Records and the Federal Records.

In Malaysia, the Federal Records are structured into various Ministries including education, trade, defence, agriculture and communication. The State Records are part and parcel of the Federal Records which in turn, are divided into departments. The 'Dewan Bandaraya' (City Hall) can provide information on city affairs of every state. The smaller towns are administered by the Town Boards. At the state level, the administration is chaired by the Menteri Besar or the Chief Minister. The district level is chaired by the District Officer. The 'mukim' is led by 'Penghulu' and the smallest unit village is led by 'Ketua Kampung'.

Thus, the most suitable area to be studied by Form One students is within a 'village', Form Two a 'Mukim' and Form Three a 'District'.

viii. A history of occupations of community

The life history of rural people is commonly linked with poverty. Thus, the relief of poverty can be considered as one of the themes. This study can provide a detailed investigation of the life of those at the lower levels of society. The District Social Welfare Office can provide information of how relief was given, the sort of people who received it and the sources of revenue.

Basically, the students' surroundings comprise various landscape features such as farms, natural vegetation, agriculture and industrial sites. Cook (1970) has suggested that the study of the history of a piece of land may include the tracing of successive ownerships; discovery and unearthing of old maps; development of road transport systems; construction of bridges, canals, railways; change of land utilisation; alteration of river direction; change of building pattern, shape of physical settlements and growth. All the features can be compared in terms of 'then' and 'now'. Stephens (1977:82) stresses that:

agricultural history is a topic where regional differences are particularly evident such as the changes of field boundaries and to what extent later developments have been affected by them.

This is in line with the activities of Felcra (Federal Land, Cultivation and Re-development Authority), to re-develop the improper and unproductive use of agricultural lands. An example of this is the padi cultivation of the Seberang Perak Scheme which used the most modern agricultural technology. This project has engulfed the original settlement and landscape features.

The life of people in towns is another interesting theme to study. The aspects of town history that could profitably be investigated include the growth and nature of physical features, landscape, housing, buildings, offices, markets, fairs, living conditions, topography and demography. Moreover, Stephens (1977:102) has drawn attention to other aspects that could be studied, stressing that:

the development of self-government in town goes hand-in-hand with emancipation from feudal control, liberties, independence and the substance of the local story.

It is true that one of the factors of rural people's emigration to town is to grasp more liberal socialisation, urbanisation and industrialisation.

A locality with industrial origins needs to be studied separately. The existing industrial estates were perhaps built up from small cottage industries which supplied the needs of local inhabitants. It is very possible that the growth or decline is influenced by the development of the neighbourhood. With regard to this matter, Stephens (1977:72) has suggested that:

the study of industrial locality needs to include their history, their products, the processor they used, their marketing activities, the size and nature of their labour force.

There are many sources that can be used to survey the above aspects of industrial locality including the books on Five-Year Malaysian Development Plans published by the Federal Government and books or magazines issued by the state governments. Moreover, local directories issued by the District Office or

Municipal Board provide the most important information on the distribution of industries, inhabitants and traders. The Blue Books refer to industrial law, public health, housing, water supply, infrastructure, transport, education and communications. The Green Book provides information about the agricultural policy launched during the second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak.

With regard to the above, it is necessary to concentrate this study, especially on the introduction of history fieldwork as a compulsory coursework in the ICSS history curriculum and to examine and observe its development at its various stages of implementation.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the students' perceptions concerning the students' favourite themes of fieldwork approaches to history. More specifically, the research intends to answer questions as follow:

- i. What are the students' favourite themes of fieldwork approaches to local history?
- ii. What are the themes favoured by students in the fieldwork approaches to history according to 'state'?

In fact, these questions are considered as 'guiding hypotheses' with the aim of surveying students' perceptions on the ICSS history fieldwork.

Methodology of the Study

The researcher identified that the population of this study are students of Forms One, Two, Three and Four. The source of information for determining the population and permission to conduct this research were obtained from the Education, Planning and Research Development (EPRD), Ministry of Education Malaysia, the States Education Department of Perak and Terengganu, and, the principals of respective schools.

The selection of respondents in this survey was based on the 'stratified-random sampling' that involved 400 students from Perak and 400 students from Terengganu, Malaysia. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents with the helped of senior assistants and classroom teachers. The data collected were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 17). The results of this study are displayed according to the number of responses and percentage. As an addition, interviews were conducted face-to-face with forty respondents selected by employing convenience sampling assisted by the classroom teachers with prior permission from the school principals. All information acquired from the interview were treated with high confidentiality and used for this research purposes only.

The findings of this research on the themes favoured by students in history fieldwork ICSS are presented and discussed in the following sections.

VII. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Analysis of Findings: Students' Perceptions on Fieldwork Approaches to History

Question 1: What are the students' favourite themes of fieldwork approaches in history?

The students were given eight themes in the questionnaire to choose the one they liked the best. The distribution of responses in general is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Fieldwork themes favoured by Students (N = 800)

No.	Themes	Responses	Percentage
1.	My Self and My Family	121	15.1
2.	School	62	7.8
3.	Population/ Demography	65	8.1
4.	Historical Building	242	30.3
5.	Historical Sites	96	12.0
6.	Place of Residence: Town/Village	91	11.4
7.	Public Figures/ Local Administration	101	12.6
8.	Occupation	22	2.8
Total		800	100.0

The results show the favourite theme selected by students in history fieldwork is 'building' with the score of 242 (30.3%). They were followed by 'family' 121 (15.1%) and 'public figures' with 101 (12.6%) responses.

On the other hand, the least popular theme among the students was 'occupation' with 22 (2.8%) responses.

Question 2:

The themes favoured by students in the fieldwork approaches of history according to 'state'.

This section presents the distribution of responses to the themes according to 'state' is shown in table 2 below:

The table shows that the most favoured theme of Hilir Perak was 'building' (180 responses) and Kuala Terengganu was 'family' and 'public figures/ local administration' with both 65 responses. On the other hand 'occupation' was the least for both Perak and Terengganu. Surprisingly, 'school' only attracted 5 respondents in Perak.

Possibly, the students had never made a study of this, or, they had and did not like it. Since, not necessarily students always get the opportunities to study the theme they like and ignore what they do not favour due to certain constraints.

Table 2:
Fieldwork themes favoured by students according to states (N = 800)

No.	Themes	Respondents (N=800)	
		Perak	Terengganu
1.	My Self and My Family	56	65
2.	School	5	57
3.	Population/ Demography	28	37
4.	Historical Building	180	62
5.	Historical Sites	42	54
6.	Place of Residence: Town/Village	53	38
7.	Public Figures/ Local Administration	36	65
8.	Occupation	0	22
Total Response		400	400

'Building' became their most favourite theme which was probably the information is easily available especially on historical buildings. Another reason would be it was a class theme lesson whereby pupils visited together with the teachers.

The following section presents the results of the questionnaire and interview concerning the favourite themes of the history fieldwork approaches.

Discussion on the Interviews of the themes favoured by students in the fieldwork approaches to history:

The researcher discovered that their statements or arguments were based on the topics they have experienced in history fieldwork either individually, in a group or a class visit. This could be the reason that some of the students use the plural pronouns, especially 'we' in their conversations.

The presentations of the findings were mainly based on the interviewees' verbal answers and not so much on their nonverbal communication. Hence, only answers significant to the research questions were selected and included in the discussions. Some of the common answers by the students were scrutinised and presented in one quotation, sentence or item.

Students' Perceptions on the theme 'building':

With regard to the themes, it was found from the questionnaire and interview with the students that the most popular building in the Perak is the clock tower in Teluk Intan. Student (P8) explained that this building served as a water reservoir supplying water around the town of Teluk Intan in the 1950s. The clock tower is slightly tilted and a landmark of the town. The students said that 'its unique function, build-up and structure has turned it into a tourist attraction of the district and the state' (P1, P6 and P18). More interestingly it is the only clock tower as such in Malaysia.

In the district of Kuala Terengganu there were three most popular buildings selected by students, namely the Payang Market, the State Museum and the White Mosque, all in the town of Kuala Terengganu (P35 and P37).

Students' Perceptions on the theme 'family':

'Family' is the second favourite theme selected by students in their local history fieldwork. The students said that this is closest to their experience. It is suggested in the ICSS as a basic theme in local history subject (P3, P12 and P31).

Many of the students said that 'we were so touched with the struggle of our parents until our family achieved its present position. We did not realise this before we studied their history in depth' (P13 and P14). One of the pupils in Kuala Terengganu said 'before working as a graduate teacher my father had experienced various kinds of jobs such as a trishaw rider, petty trader at the Payang Market and security guard' (P14). One of

the religious school students mentioned that 'during school time my mother had to cycle for twelve miles everyday. The conditions were worst during the rainy season because the road was so muddy and in some parts was not possible to cycle' (P13). This condition was also experienced by the parents of a few students in Lower Perak (P2, P15 and P20).

Student (P2) stated that family pride might be enhanced by recording achievements of family members in a variety of areas including academic qualifications, sports, entertainment, social services and others. On the other hand, (P32) admitted that sad events should also be included such as a death, tragedy, failure or victim of brutality such as during the Japanese Occupation 1941-1945 or Emergency in 1948-1960.

However, student (P17) stated that real distress can be caused to adopted children, children in care or children with a sad family background. Such students can be excused for showing little enthusiasm for family studies. Other families quite simply want to keep private what they consider to be their own business.

In this case, the student could be informed to accept the fact that 'rise and fall', 'success and failure', 'happiness and sadness' are common elements of life which are significant in present and future undertakings, especially for the family concerned. As Wrigley (1970) remarks, the influence of the family in shaping student's habits of thought and action and circumscribing, has always been immense. With the family the child learns attitudes of mind, modes of conduct, ideals and taboos which, later, they will later pass on to their own children.

Hence, this study can stimulate a sense of the family as an institution. If a local study could provide a written record of certain prominent families, they might well sponsor the investigation Mumford (1959).

Students' Perceptions on the theme 'occupation':

On the other hand, 'occupation' was the least attractive topic selected by students in their fieldwork. The occupations selected by students in Kuala Terengganu are 'trishaw riding' and 'coastal fishing'. These are still among the common jobs of the people in the area (P26, P42 and P44). In the Lower Perak District, 'self-subsistence farming' is the common job, especially in the coconut and cocoa farms. In fact this district is one of the major coconut producing regions in the country. The students said 'working on the coconut farms is not really promising. The job is tough but has very little income. The conditions become worst when the price of the coconut is very low, like nowadays' (P3, P11 and P21).

The researcher observed from the students' answers that 'occupation' became the least popular choice because most of the jobs surrounding it are not attractive, not inspiring and not challenging, particularly to the students in the Perak. One of the students from a Science school who has travelled to many places in Perak said 'the Lower Perak is one of the least developed districts in the state of Perak. There are no modern factories and no sophisticated buildings. The main road is small and undulating especially towards Bagan Datoh' (P15).

Another reason is that the government encourages the people to divert their source of income to the industrial sectors which are more stable and could help them achieve a better living. The campaign is widely supported by various public media such as newspapers, television, radio and recently the internet of the Information Technology (IT), especially after the launched of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) projects in 1997 and nationwide utilization of 'Broadband' facilities in 2009.

Teachers should make sure their students choose a theme for which the sources and evidence are not too difficult to find. The student could try to find a book about the selected theme in the public or school library, read the book and follow any notes at the bottom of the pages like a detective. They would use the bibliography or list of books to read on the same subject at the end to find further trails. The library may have a history card index, computer database or microfiche that will help them. Student should not hesitate to ask the librarian if they do not know to use the facilities in the library.

VIII. CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above that students managed to give proper answers after consulting appropriate sources such as parents, teacher, officers, and, library. The students need to have basic or background knowledge of certain sources before studying them in the field. The proper arrangement and preparation in the history fieldwork can introduce students to the way historians think and work and the way history comes to be written. Students can learn that the work of historians is not only to examine fresh evidence but requires also detailed contextual knowledge of the subject. This may also help them to identify the relationship between historians and their work and the link between published work on national and local history. Finally, they become aware that history is not a fictional creation of historians, for though historians seek to reconstruct the past, they have to base their interpretations upon evidence. Hence, if this is the case it means that the students are aware of the changes proposed by the government for the development of the country towards the challenges of Vision 2020 and realisation of 1-Malaysia.

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